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U. S. Department of Agriculture

Housekeepers' Chat

Monday, June 2, 1930.

Not for Publication

Subject: "Serving the Family Meal." Information from "Serving the Family Meal" by Miriam Williams and Blanche E. Hyde, Colorado Agricultural College, Extension Service. Menu and recipe from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Bulletin available: "Eggs at Any Meal." (Note: Please emphasize the fact that there are no government bulletins on table service.)

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"Serving the Family Meal" is our subject today. It is our subject because I have just received an attractive folder by that title, written by two Colorado college women. If there is time, we'll have a dinner menu too -- a very good menu for the first Monday in June.

Of course, there are no set rules for serving the family meal, but sometimes it's good for us to check up on the way we are serving it, to see whether it's the best way possible for our husbands and children and occasional guests. As the authors of this folder say, "It is consistent everyday practice of simple courtesies, and the wholesome cheerful atmosphere of the most ordinary meal, which marks the family of culture and refinement."

Here's a paragraph headed "Dining Room Versus Kitchen for Eating," which I will read to you:

"The dining room is logically the place for dining or eating, but many homes are finding it only an occasionally used room. The popular breakfast nook or corner of a kitchen is often so much more convenient that the busy woman, who does a thousand things besides serving meals, feels that she deserves this simplified form of meal service. However, the family has a right to eat among attractive surroundings, if for no other reason than the desirable effect upon digestion. If it is difficult to have an orderly kitchen when the meal is served, then it is wisest to have a dining room meal where all are away from the confusion and odors of cooking.

"The place for eating should be well ventilated, clean, with sunlight if possible or at least plenty of light. Wherever the family eats, that place should be pleasant enough that one is at ease when an unexpected guest drops in at meal time.

So much for that topic. Here's something about the colorful dishes which are so popular nowadays. Colorful dishes are right attractive, provided they aren't placed on table cloths which are too colorful. Get a combination of bright dishes, a jazzy table cover, colored glassware, and red-handled knives and forks -- and it fairly takes away your appetite. Don't you think so?

Here's a chapter on "Setting the Table." I hesitate to say very much about setting the table, for after all, there is no law against setting the table any way you please.

However, there are a few rules which have been found convenient. Here's a picture of one place, or cover, correctly set according to the authors of this bulletin. I'll read the directions: Allow at least 20 to 24 inches for each person at the table, and 30 inches if possible. All silver and dishes should be one inch from the edge of the table. The cutting edge of the knife is always turned in. Spoons and knives are generally at the right, and forks at the left. Silver to be used with dessert is usually brought in with that course, since it is considered poor form to display a great deal of silver on the table at one time. A bread-and-butter spreader may be placed across the upper right hand side of the small bread-and-butter plate, with the blade turned in.

Here's a bit of information you may be interested in: When a table is correctly set, all serving silver is placed beside the dish for which it is intended, never in it. This means that the jelly spoon is beside the jelly dish, and parallel with other silver on the table, the gravy ladle is beside the gravy boat, and so forth. Carving knife and fork are at the right and left of the place reserved for the platter.

Now what about the salad plate, and the bread-and-butter plate? There seems to be a great deal of discussion as to the correct place for the salad plate. Many hostesses now prefer the salad plate nearer the center, above the dinner plate. That sounds sensible -- I always did think it was a bother to reach across a big dinner plate, to eat the salad. Bread-and-butter plates go above the forks, to the left of the dinner plate. Then naturally, if salad is served with the dinner, of course the salad plate goes between the bread and butter plate and the drinking glass. I'm glad that momentous question is settled.

And the napkin? Usually place at the left of the forks, but it may be placed in the center of the cover, if the table is rather crowded.

Here's a good item to remember about unnecessary dishes: "Nothing is more disturbing than to be continually passing dishes. Salts and peppers should be conveniently placed, allowing a pair to each two persons when possible. The most attractive tables are those which have a minimum number of dishes, but these contain food carefully selected and nicely prepared." Well, we won't disagree with that statement.

Now, before we leave the interesting topic of table service, perhaps I'd better tell you that we have no government bulletins on the subject. The only bulletin I'm going to advertise today is the egg leaflet, "Eggs at Any Meal," for in this leaflet is today's prize recipe: Curried Eggs and Rice. Have you ever cooked this intriguing dish? Neither had I, till last summer. And I've been sorry ever since -- I mean sorry ever since that I had lived to such a ripe old age without discovering this appetizing combination of Curried Eggs and Rice. The recipe is on page 3, in the egg leaflet. I'll read it, for the sake of those who do not have this leaflet. Please abbreviate the

words tablespoon and teaspoon -- a big T for tablespoon, and a small t for teaspoon. Ready? Eleven ingredients, for Curried Eggs and Rice!

6 eggs	1 teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons butter	3 drops tabasco sauce.
1 tablespoon chopped green pepper	3 tablespoons flour
2 tablespoons chopped onion	2 cups milk, and
2 tablespoons chopped celery	3 cups cooked rice.
1 teaspoon curry	

Eleven ingredients for Curried Eggs: (Repeat)

Cook the eggs hard. Make a sauce as follows: Melt the butter in a skillet, add the green pepper, onion, and celery and cook for 2 or 3 minutes. Stir into this the seasoning and the flour, mix well, and add the cold milk. Cook for 3 or 4 minutes, stirring constantly. Make a bed of the hot flaky cooked rice on a hot platter. Arrange over it the hard cooked eggs, cut in quarters, and pour the hot sauce over the eggs and rice. Sprinkle the top with chopped parsley, and serve at once.

The rest of the menu includes Asparagus; Raw Spring Onions; Pear Salad; and a dessert that is "different" -- Crackers and Cheese.

Now isn't that a tasty combination of foods? Curried Eggs; Asparagus; Spring Onions; Pear Salad; and Crackers and Cheese.

On the Pear Salad, serve a mayonnaise and catsup dressing -- that is, a combination of mayonnaise and catsup -- half as much catsup as mayonnaise. That's good on Pear Salad.

Tomorrow Mr. Webb of the Department of Agriculture will furnish us a talk on flies, and how to get rid of them. Mr. Webb promised to give me the information, if I'd let him say whatever he pleases. So I've given him carte blanche -- on the subject of flies.

Tuesday: "Shooing That Fly."
